













Sarah Benedict

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ORATION,
IN HONOR OF THE ELECTION OF
PRESIDENT JEFFERSON,
AND
THE PEACEABLE ACQUISITION OF
LOUISIANA,

DELIVERED AT THE
National Festival,

IN
HARTFORD,

ON THE 11th OF MAY, 1804.

By ABRAHAM BISHOP.

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ORATION.

WE are not convened to do homage to a tyrant, nor to parade the virtues of a *President and Senate for life*, nor to bow before a First Consul, nor to bend the knee before a host of privileged orders; but we have assembled to pay our annual respects to a President, whom the voice of his country has called to the head of the freest and happiest nation on earth.

While Providence is giving to Britons a solemn commentary on the burning of our towns and the murder of our brethren, we are enjoying the fruits of a glorious defence against the passive obedience, which her insatiate court attempted to impose on us, as a punishment for the high misdemeanors of having descended from themselves, of having fought liberty of mind and conscience in this new world, and of having resolved to be free.

While France is learning, under awful impressions, the danger of delegating power without limit, and of trusting to ambition and the sword what ought to remain in the sacred deposit of peace and legislative counsel, the people of most of our States enjoy the full benefit of free elections, and derive from them all the blessings, which the best state of society admits.

While symptoms of death have seized on the governments of the eastern continent, and are hurrying them to that grave, which has buried all the ancient empires, we

are in youth, advancing to maturity rapidly, as a sound constitution well guarded, and the best nourishment well administered can advance us.

The history of the world teaches that nations, like men, must decay. Ours will not forever escape the fate of others. Wealth, luxury, vice, aristocracies will attack us in our decline: these are evils of society, never to be courted, but to be put to as distant a day as possible.—The season of national youth, of vigor, of pure principles and fair prospects is peculiarly a season of joy.—We have lived at a period, more eventful than any which can recur. Having passed the dark season of our revolution, having witnessed the birth of our empire, having combated the tendency of an administration, which sought to rank us with nations, whose systems of eternal war and debt we abhorred, which publicly approved the doctrines of the old school, and in every measure sounded our retreat to the ruins of the old world, we have lived to see a real republic, combining all the blessings for which our fathers professed to embrace this country, and distressing none but the enemies of civil and religious liberty.

The armies of kings have combated bravely and madly for victory, the glory of which could be shared only by their masters, and for small portions of territory, which, when acquired, could only serve as graves for the slain, and as monuments of the thoughtless inhumanity of war. The natives and first occupants of nearly half our globe have been wantonly driven from their homes by men, who afterwards claimed an imprescriptible right to the soil on no better ground than that they had committed robbery and murder to acquire it.

From nations, who recognize in supreme power the sum of political right, we turn to our own country, where, through the wise counsels of our President, an immense territory has been peaceably ceded to us by the most powerful nation on earth.

Uniform respect for the sovereign people and for peace has characterized our President : his ears have been open to the voice of the people, who called him to his high office, and he has waited till that voice was distinctly expressed. In the present case the southern people called loudly for the acquisition, republicans were united in sentiment, and federalists declared that Louisiana was worth the price of blood.——To kings and the lovers of a President and Senate for life be it left to shed blood for territory; our President saw in amicable negotiation a prospect of gaining the desired possession.——He might have marshalled armies and bid defiance to the mighty power of France—the blood of your sons and brothers might have flown like the waters of the Ohio and reddened the Mississippi, and this would have been the only export ever acquired——the banks of that majestic river would have furnished another scene of whitened bones, and this would have been the only right of deposit ever secured ! Louisiana would have remained the proud possession of France, a land of citadels, from which all the southern world would have been successfully annoyed. The wilderness, now blossoming as the rose, and filled with the shouts of republican husbandmen, would have been restored to beasts of prey. The price of blood would indeed have been paid, but the object forever defeated !

By our revolution, which cost more than an hundred millions, beside much shedding of blood and years of anxious suspense, the Atlantic states of this continent were redeemed from the dominion of an island. By the skilful negotiation of Livingston and Monroe was purchased, at an expence of 15 millions, a territory equal in extent to these states. Had the rivers Connecticut, Hudson and Delaware been owned by France and gained by government at any price, we should have felt the immediate profit and have acknowledged it a cheap purchase ; but to us as a nation the acquisition of Loui-

iana is as important as would have been the surrendry of those rivers. To the rapidly increasing and fruitful regions of the south it is equal to the possession of the Atlantic by these northern states.

One fourth of these 15 millions constitutes a fund to indemnify our own citizens for spoliations and claims. The interest of the whole, not at 8 but 6 per cent, is provided for without the revival of an excise or the imposition of any additional tax, and the whole will be reimbursed by sales of land in the territory. Possession has been given us, government is established and the flag of the United States has been displayed at New-Orleans in the midst of acclamations by a people, who for the first time, since the settlement of that country, could be embraced as the free citizens of a republic.

To federalists this territory, for which they would have shed blood, now seems a barren waste, where no verdure quickens; but to us it appears fruitful, abounding in broad rivers and streams, producing whatever is necessary to our commerce with foreign nations. We see in Louisiana an assurance of long life to our state. The Atlantic states, as they advance to that condition of society, where wealth and luxury tend to vice and aristocracies, will yield to that country accessions of enterprising men. The spirit of faction, which tends to concentrate, will be destroyed by this diffusion. We see in this acquisition the enterprize, which it excites, the fraternity which it promises, an asylum for the oppressed of all nations, without fear of an alien act, destroying the germs of war and opening the spring of that century of seasons, which exhibits the whole western continent detached from the wars of the eastern, from its kings, its first consuls, and nobles, from vast plans of dominion by conquest, a country producing the best and making it the interest of all nations to trade with us, promising

a rich addition of revenue to expedite a legal oblivion to a detested funding system.

Such a President, such a distinguished acquisition and such an immense host of Connecticut Republicans convened to rejoice ! This coincidence must present to our minds this moment, as combining events important to ourselves, our children, our country and the world, never to be forgotten. A President advancing with the olive branch, while other potentates exchange no civilities but at the point of the sword—peaceable acquisition perched on the ruins of conquest, and our rejoicing rising like a Phoenix from the ashes of federalism.

We have before rejoiced that the aristocratic factions of our country were humbled—that the energetic measures of the reign of terror were at an end, and that in the person of our first magistrate was expressed the public sentiment in favor of the principles of our revolution. While greater lamentation and woe have been heard among federalists than was sounded in Ramah, because they had lost not only their first-born, but nearly the whole of their family, we have rejoiced in the constant increase of confidence in our administration, produced by a conviction of the integrity and utility of its measures. The people of other nations are born to see some hereditary potentate over them, scattering death and desolation, wasting their substance, dragging their children to the slaughter, and conducting as if they had been sent on earth merely to curse every portion of it, to which their power extended—but we see at our head a man, whom the people have literally delighted to honor, whose life has been republican and whose services have been devoted to an experimental illustration of that political system, which the philosophers of the east always considered visionary. He is demonstrating that a republican government is the strongest on earth and that the will of the people, faithfully expressed, forms the most perfect system

of laws and policy : A task far more elevated than that of making marble pincushions*.

In the acquisition which we celebrate, he has exhibited the characteristic difference of *system* between the parties. Federalists would have shed blood for Louisiana, he preferred to purchase it from the right owners. They love the expensive and energetic measures of the old school, he prefers the pure, peaceful principles, the truth and value of which were sealed by the ceaseless labors and dangers of an army of freemen.

This acquisition did not rise as would a palace from the midst of ruins, but it arose naturally from a course of measures, having for their basis peace, economy, equal rights and honest friendship for all nations. Union in these sentiments has produced a festival from Orleans to New-Hampshire, and it must add not a little to the occasion that this last state is substantially added to the republican force. Massachusetts and Connecticut are the solitary mourners over the remains of federalism.

We shall not do injustice to the occasion, which has convened us, if we improve the remainder of it in examining the peculiar attitude of this state in respect to this important acquisition and the other measures of the general government.

This state has furnished no part of the votes, by which President Jefferson was elected, no part of the wise counsels by which Louisiana was obtained, and the honorable and reverend federal republicans† who convened yesterday, do not rejoice in the event which we celebrate.

Formerly decency was outraged, if the character of the President and the measures of government were not treated with respect : now decency is outraged, if both

* See Mr. Daggett's oration, where the republican system of Mr. Jefferson is represented to be as idle and visionary as would be an attempt to make pincushions from marble.

† Not long since the very term Republican, was reprobated by the federalists here, who now call themselves Federal Republicans.

be not treated with marked contempt. Formerly the friends of the general government held all the offices in this State, and asserted loudly the political infallibility of the majority of the Union : Now those offices are holden by the enemies of the government, and republicans have been treated with as much severity as if they had destroyed the first born of every family, for the mere crime of having applied principles, which federalists lately held sacred and inviolable. The exterior of this state has been democratic, and every thing promised attachment to such a system of measures as is now pursued : Yet religion has always been in danger and under pretence of this danger, measures, which the people would from their natural habits have abhorred, have been approved, and measures, which they would have approved, have been reprobated ; yet in all these alarms not one federal priest, deacon, judge or lawyer considered his own religion in danger. All were alarmed about the religion of their neighbors, yet not one man could be found in the state, who had any apprehension for his own.

Every seeming enigma of this kind may be solved by a correct explanation of facts.

The charter of Charles 2d. gave to Connecticut power to raise armies, levy war and do many things, wholly inconsistent with our relation to the federal government, but provided well enough, for the day of it, the means by which the people of this, then thinly settled colony, might govern themselves.

At the declaration of independence this charter became of no effect, and it was proper that the people of this free state should, like the people of other free states, have been convened to form a constitution : But the legislature, which was not impowered for that purpose, and which may repeal at pleasure its own laws, USURPED the power of enacting, that the form of government, contained in the charter of king Charles, should be the civil constitution of this state. Thus by the pleasure of his majesty all the legis-

lative, executive and judicial powers of government tumbled into a common mass,* together with the power of raising armies, whenever the stockholders of power should think best.

This precise condition of society, absurd and unsafe as it is in theory, has proved far more so in practice. At the present moment all these powers, TOGETHER WITH A COMPLETE CONTROL OF ELECTIONS, is in the hands of seven lawyers;† who have gained a seat at the council board.—These seven virtually make and repeal laws as they please, appoint all the judges, plead before those judges, and constitute themselves a supreme court of errors to decide in the last resort on the laws of their own making. To crown this absurdity, they have repealed a law which prohibited them to plead before the very court of which they are judges.

The profit and power, attached to these multiform beings, may be seen by the following view. The remaining five of the council are frequently judges of county or probate courts, of course dependant on the will of the seven. In the lower house, the speaker, the two clerks and many of the debating members are in the nominations for congress or council, by advice and consent of the seven, and could never gain an election in opposition to them. In that house more than one half of the members are annually dependant on the seven for a re-appointment as judges or justices or for military promotion.

This shews under what influence the legislative and executive powers of our government are dispensed.

By the breath of these seven men are annually brought

* In the Congressional debate on the repeal of the new judiciary law our federalists insisted strongly on the great excellence of the federal constitution, because it kept distinct and independent the three great branches of government, but the same federalists are now invincibly opposed to a similar distinction and independence in our own government.

† These seven lawyers are, Messrs Daggell, Smith, C. Goodrich, Brace, Allen, Edmonds, and E. Goodrich, holding the same undefined powers, which their predecessors have held, and which their successors will hold, till we shall have a constitution. The term, seven men, will be used (as was the term, directory, under the French government) signifying the depository of supreme power. Every ambitious, all in force will be justly considered their all, till they shall repeal it.

into new life six judges of superior court, twenty-eight of probate, forty of county courts and five hundred and ten justices of the peace, with power of increasing these little potentates, equal to that of George in the increase of his poor knights of Windsor, an honor conferred on every man, who congratulates him on his occasional transitions from common to political delirium.—To each of these judges the silent language of the seven men is constantly sounding like a catechism in the ears of a child, “Remember now thy Creator, lest the evil days come and the years draw nigh, wherein he shall say, I have no pleasure in thee.”

The judges of the superior court are generally dependant on their salaries for the support of their families, hence, is their direct subordination to the seven men, who are often suitors and generally advocates before them. The judges are in fact bound to the whole amount of their salaries to obey the seven men in all cases whatsoever, and if they were to forfeit their recognizance they would lose their seats.

Will any one pretend that a judge even of the superior court can act unbiassed, when he is to decide between his creator and a man, who calls that creator an USURPER, and him a dependant creature, into whom is annually breathed the breath of official life, and who owes the preservation of his being to one of the parties. Surely no one will pretend it, and yet these creators and their immediate associates are generally parties or the advocates of parties, and in the last case feel for their employers, the same kind of zeal which the Swifts foldier has for the king in whose service he happens to have enlisted.

If the influence of these seven men naturally operates thus on judges of the superior court, how much more will it operate on those humble beings of the county and probate courts, and to what boundless extent on the dependant dust and ashes, which in the form of justices are exercising a seven dollar jurisdiction throughout the state.

We do not contend that infinite power could not have created beings above *party* influence, but if such were ever created, they have not been placed on the benches of our courts ; for the judges of our superior court were so eminently political partizans that they were appointed by the legislature ELECTORS in order to insure an opposition to the present order of things. Are these impartial judges between federalists and republicans. We deceive ourselves, when we expect mere men to be guided by supernatural motives ? Could major Wetmore have had any confidence of fair trial, when his judges were appointed by his prosecutor. Is it fair after a newspaper controversy, where a councillor, a senator of congress, a clergyman and a judge of superior court have been marshalled against and closely pressed by a single republican, to attach the meadow of the printer and to bring the question whether that meadow shall be the property of the right owner or of the clergyman, under the auspices of the judge, the testimony of the senator and the argument of the counsellor, before a federal jury.* Are federalists willing that their rights shall be thus submitted to us ? Where is the golden rule of morality ?

The masters of the state may vilify the president and all his officers and all his friends in the grossest terms, and we have no resort but by an appeal to their slaves. If we offer to reply, our all is at their mercy. This, without any compliment, is a most detestable state of things, and yet whatever grievances we may suffer, the sedition law of this state pronounces, that *whoever shall defame any court or justice or the proceeding of any court shall be punished by fine, imprisonment, disfranchisement or banishment according to the discretion of the court, before which the trial is had.*

The vast power of these seven men recommends them to extensive employ in their professions. If a client can

* Reference is here had to a prosecution in favor of *Peasey Huntington* against the printer of the *Mercury* for an expression in one of the numbers of *DAVID*. Of the merits of the case we say nothing, but we say that the printer has not a fair chance of trial, because his political adversaries are to be his triers.

secure in his interest the man who makes the laws and the judges, and who decides supremely on the laws, he justly considers himself to have gained the best points in his case.* Questions respecting lawyers' fees often come before the courts : it is the interest of the seven men that fees should be high : one hundred and fifty federal lawyers are to be supported : the decisions have been so uniformly against the employer, that unconditional submission to their terms is becoming the order of the day.

Without referring you to many gross wrongs arising from the premises, or to the evidence of extreme bitterness in many of the judges against us and our cause, we trust that the corruption of our judiciary system will be pronounced as ample as that of the legislative and executive : but multitudes are ready to say, you may correct these evils by electing other men to office.

At this all important point these seven men have fortified themselves with great adroitness. Having no constitutional check, the possession of unlimited power made it an immense object for them to secure their own re-elections. We have already presented the basis of their operation : but every military officer must, if he votes against them, do it secretly or hazard his rank. Every republican, having a petition pending before the legislature, must adopt the same caution or expect leave to withdraw it. Turnpike, insurance and bank companies must remember their creator on the day of election. To all pliable classes of men has been offered something from the public stock to insure their influence : To you, sir, be a packer-general of beef with hundreds of trusty federal deputies under you.— To you, gentlemen, be ye sheriffs of our counties, with power from us over every poor man in the state and with faithful men under you to be appointed by our judges of the county courts. To others, be ye notaries public or in-

* The undue influence complained of has been doubtless exerted at times in favor of republicans, but the instances are not numerous, nor do they argue in favor of courts thus organized and influenced.

spectors of turn-pike roads. To academies a lottery; to college thousands from the treasury—to the missionary society an incorporation with liberty to hold an immense fund. It would be endless to pursue all the arts, by which privileged orders have been made subservient to the powers which are.—Eminent above the rest is the visible junction of Moses and Aaron in the corporation of Yale college, in the academy of arts and sciences, in the missionary society, at commencements and elections, on fast-days and thanksgivings, those precious forerunners of our proxies, when the people are to know the candidates for council and congress, on whom the seven men propose to pass the ceremony of an election.

It is astonishing that against such a system of impediments, and against such a host of excellencies and honorables, as are constantly paraded before the people, our cause and our untitled candidates should have made any progress, but this astonishment must increase, when the next course of this election dish shall be served up.

The legislature, finding our numbers to increase, *innovated* on the old election law, which had wisely provided for a secret, unbiassed vote, and they enacted that nominations should be made by the freemen standing up. Thus every man, who had not fortitude to meet them and all their arts, was insured to the federal side, and he who thus opposed them, was sure of abuse and persecution. By this innovation these legislators and their immediate dependants were to preside in the meetings and to count votes, given for and against themselves, and they were to have an original concurrent voice with selectmen in the approbation of candidates for the freemen's oath. They did not extend the innovation so far as to admit to the oath, men of full age and capacity and of fair character, who labor on highways, do military duty and pay taxes, but who are deficient of estate, worth seven dollars pr. annum, nor did they exclude clergy men who render none of these services; but under such auspices and with the force of

all the beings dependant on them and all the subordinate beings by law sub-dependant : under the auspices of twelve newspapers, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against republicans, great praises of the men in place, great devotion to Washington and good government, to religion and steady habits——the people are called on to vote.

Thus the head-waters of corruption, which flow in three separate streams through the legislative, executive and judicial departments, reunited form a powerful confluence at our elections.

On equal ground the republicans of this state would long since have prevailed ; but even against this machinery, more complicated than can be found among the depraved governments of Europe, they would have prevailed, had not the usurpers of power called to their aid many singular auxiliaries.

The whole state government being aristocratic, the leaders saw ruin in the advance of our cause—therefore every man, who cherished republican principles, was derided and abused as a deserter from steady habits—every man, who questioned the infallibility of our state oracles, was held up to public contempt—every one, who prayed the clergy to preach the gospel and to leave politics to civilians, was pronounced a heretic, deserving of no mercy. If any man spoke of liberty, equality or the principles of our revolution, he was denounced as an innovator and an illuminat.—Sermons were preached in favor of the men in place and in terms not to be doubted we were charged with belonging to secret masonic societies, whose object was the destruction of all religion and government. The grossest misrepresentations of our proceedings were made in and out of the desk, and the most malignant slanders were dealt out against the private character of our president. Large sums of our property were annually collected for the support of clergy, who courted the loss of our

confidence and larger sums for lawyers, who were sacrificing our rights.

If we offered to rejoice in the election of our president, the best men of our party were insulted with the odious appellations of infidels and disorganizers. Years of most exemplary piety, of ceaseless public service and even the hoary head, found in the way of righteousness, were no protection against the friends of order—a truce was bid to God, to heaven and religion, in order that every outrage might be committed on the friends of the general government.* For a time these federal auxiliaries hindered our advance, but at length their enormity excited resentment, and in every quarter of the state were rising up men, who would brave the decisions of courts, the artificial terrors of elections and all the vengeance, which the worst of passions could vent on the best of causes.

If this be the good government, this the religion and these the steady habits, of which federalists boast so much, we cannot deny them the full credit of their professions.

For the remedy of all these evils in our State Government, we propose that the people shall be convened to form A CONSTITUTION WHICH SHALL SEPARATE THE LEGISLATIVE, EXECUTIVE AND JUDICIAL POWERS,—SHALL DEFINE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF FREEMEN SO THAT LEGISLATORS SHALL NOT TAMPER WITH ELECTION LAWS, AND SHALL DISTRICT THE STATE, SO THAT FREEMEN MAY JUDGE OF THE CANDIDATES FOR THEIR SUFFRAGES. These provisions are so perfectly rational and so completely effectual, that we need not enlarge on the correctness of the remedy. It lays an axe at the root of the evil, offers emancipation to thousands of white slaves, reduces the masters to the condition of citizens and crushes a host of aristocracies.

Some republicans have feared that the federalists would avail themselves of their present majority to call a con-

* For the season, to which this statement is predicated, see the federal papers for five months previous to our last annual Festival.

vention for this purpose. This fear may be allayed in several forms. Any change must be for the better, but should the federalists now relinquish their boasts of the perfection of our state policy under their management, instantly would their majority desert them. Could a convention be wholly composed of federalists, they would never risque to offer a constitution to the people, so full of absurdities as the present system. The very sound of a Connecticut constitution appals federalists: It is to them like the (Ca ira) war song of France to its monarch and nobles, or like the miraculous sound, at which fell the walls of Jericho. A constitution will give a death-blow to Connecticut federalism, and with it, to all hostility against the general government.

The first christians did not fear that the chief priests and elders would turn to the true worship. Luther and Calvin did not neglect to sound the protestant trump lest the pope and cardinals should become protestant. All the proud systems of our world, which have originated in, and been conducted by the passions, have stood it to the last, and be assured that the *federalism of this state will, like a ship on a lee shore, under an obstinate commander, stand straight on for destruction, and perish with every sail set.*

Humbly indeed would the people of other States conceive of our address and industry, or of the integrity and intelligence of our people, could they believe that we had been combating on ordinary ground. Had the parties in this state been divided on the merits of the past and present administrations, long since should we have prevailed. The body of our people did never approve the standing army, the excise, the land-tax, nor the war system: They have generally approved the repeal of these, the reduction of our expenditures, the diminution of executive patronage and the acquisition of Louisiana; but the federalism of this State consisted of leagues of privileged orders, clinging to each other and revolving about one common centre—a congregation of passions, aiming at personal benefit, instead of a system of principles, operating for general good. We have been like an army, which, after taking a few out posts, is obliged to entrench with little armour before the great fortress, which has always commanded the country, full of men, of artillery and pro-

visions, trained to the arts of war. Church and State is the grand fortress of Connecticut federalism; We have already presented the principal points of its strength and of its attitude towards the general government.

Singular as has been our contest have been the means of our increase. The federalists pronounced that the election of Mr. Jefferson would annihilate public faith, destroy credit abroad and confidence at home, would weaken our commerce, and would endanger religion and its altars, with a multitude of other fables, in the whole of which they have been proved to be false prophets. Religion and its altars have been safe, our commerce has yielded, in an increase of revenue, proof of its prosperity and the means of diminishing our taxes.—Public stock is even in high federal estimation, and our credit abroad has been sufficient for the purchase of Louisiana. Clear proof that federalism meant to mislead on this subject has been highly useful to us.

When the republicans of this state, oppressed long and sorely as was Israel in Egypt, proposed to rejoice in a prospect of deliverance under the administration of our president, torrents of abuse were poured from the federal papers on men, whose whole lives had proved their integrity, and to aid the work of ridicule a psalm distinguished for devotion and ascriptions of glory to the Creator for his wonderful works to the children of men, was transformed into an infamous ballad, and the name of a noted courtesan substituted in place of that of the God of heaven.—This extremity of federal imprudence aided our cause.

When the federal papers of this state quoted from Callender charges of the basest crimes against our President, multitudes decided that those could not be christians, who would support such inhuman slanders of a character, which had been sought into its high estimation through close ranks of irritated assailants. Not thus did our republican papers assail the private character of Mr. Adams.—Hence have we gained.

When federalists were applauding in one breath the advice of President Washington, and in the next vilifying the southern republican states, we gained in numbers.*

* "There will always be reason to distrust the patriotism of those, who in any quarter may endeavor to weaken the bands of the union.—Disgracing men may endeavor to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views between northern and southern, &c." Washington's Farewell Address.

When to add an election reports about French fleets, foreign loans, raising of salaries, emoluments of officers and the mighty wonders, which our legislature had wrought in the state treasury, were employed, and afterwards proved to be unfounded, we gained in numbers.

These reports are well recollected, but no French fleet arrived, no loan was demanded; salaries have never been higher than they were in 1793, the emoluments of the principal collectors were diminished soon after Mr. Jefferson came to office. Those of many other collectors have been since diminished—no clerk hire in our collectors' offices has been paid by the government, and as to the savings of money and paying all our state debts and having the treasury full; it is exactly true that by the sale of our Reserve we own some money and bonds, instead of owning land. By taxing the people, money has been placed in the treasury, and our state debts were assumed by the United States: But another thing is true, viz. that what this State owes as her proportion of the principal of the funded debt is more than equal to the whole of our state debts, and the whole purchase money of the Reserve, and all the money in the treasury; and all the public paper, which we hold; and our real estate and industry are pledged for the support of the public faith, and we are paying annually our full share of the interest of all this. Here is a saving of which our federal papers have never boasted!

When federalism discovered itself, under the present administration, directly opposite to what it was under the last, many discerned that there was less of principle in it than had been pretended.

Had federalists filled their nominations with men, who had the character of christians in their own neighborhoods—had they employed *abnissians* to retail federal columns about religion and the pious clergy; had they exercised towards us charity or even decency—had they confined the clergy to their professions—they would have checked our progress; but if their leaders have really possessed the amiable graces of christianity, we must allow them the credit of superlative modesty in the total concealment of them from the world. We have recognized in all their professions only the old continental currency of the same class of men in every age of the world.

It is a memorable fact that federalism, with all the talents and all the weight of character, and all the piety, and all the steady habits in the state, have by their weak and wicked innovations, yielded a powerful aid to our cause. We have reason to rejoice that it has never relaxed of its violence, and outrage—that it has given us public proof every week, that it possessed none of that charity which hopeth and endureth all things, full of mercy and without hypocrisy, that its papers have exhibited all the qualities of a pestilence, which aims at the fairest hopes of society, social intercourse and domestic peace.—No evil could arrive to any of us or to our friends; even death could not deprive us of our dearest relatives, without exposing us in the moment of affliction to the poisoned arrows of the destroyer. This federal policy has nerved our arms, and we will not repine, but rather glory to have been assailed by the enemies of liberty.

Holy federalism, which can emaculate the leopard and bleach the ethiopean, which offers the horns of the altar to the murderers of reputation, and cities of refuge to men loaded with crimes, has itself violated all the laws, which it professed to revere, has dishonored that religion, which it affected to serve, and has thus aided the government and the friends of the government, which it had resolved to humble and destroy.

Republicans, what our eyes have seen, what our ears have heard, and what we have personally experienced, will be better impressed on our memories than what our fathers have told us. We have lived in a State, which, exhibiting to the world a democratic exterior, has actually practised within itself, all the arts of an organized aristocracy, under the management of the old firm of Moses and Aaron.

No single man is wicked enough to have corrupted the three great branches of our government and our elections; as much as they have been corrupted—perhaps no *body of men* as wicked enough for this purpose; and certainly the compass of a few years would not be sufficient to complete a system of government, such as ours. The present moment presents this case in the strongest possible view.

Our council, holding the mainspring of government in the control of all laws and appointments, the majority of this council com-

posed of practising lawyers—All the courts dependant on this council, and the council itself a supreme court over all the rest, and this majority having a right to plead before this supreme court—the lives, liberties property and reputations of all the people of the state subject to this council, whose will is sovereign and conclusive—more than half of the other legislative branch dependant on the council—all bodies of men, wishing for corporate powers or for aid from the treasury, looking up to the council—The council associated with the corporation of college—having assumed the guardianship of literature and religion; *even the election law, that palladium of elective franchise, subject to such alterations, as their zeal for power may dictate*—and the clergy contending that the interests of religion require the continuance of these men in office.

This may be a delightful state of things for federalists, but to men, who must suffer all the evils, which arise from such complicated usurpation of power it appears to be a wanton violation of all those civil, moral and religious principles, which have been accredited by the world.

To federalists no apology would be sufficient, and to republicans none is necessary, for our having improved a part of this occasion in tracing to their source our political evils. It is best that the course of our political warfare should be well understood. We are not contending about the general government: its measures have been far above the censure of its enemies. Ours is a local contest, the issue of which will decide whether our civil and religious rights are to depend on caprice or on constitutional compact. We are contending for that which the uniform sense of civilized nations has decreed to be the right of the people.—We do not impute to the body of federalists, the evils of which we complain. There are many aged federalists in this state, who in their better days would have opposed the current, some magistrates, many of the clergy, and thousands of the people, who have been deceived into the part which they have taken. These will soon become *really* freemen; but the leaders will retain their places by the subtlety of their arts, till they shall be expelled by the energy of our votes. *Their power is sinking, we are advancing, and shall unquestionably prevail.*

But we ought not to seek this issue for the purposes of re-

saliation, nor of mere change of men, nor for wanton innovations, nor for imposing on others burthens, of which we have complained. A constitution, formed by the people, would be a safe foundation for many rational improvements in our laws, our appointments, our courts and elections.

Great alarms have been excited, lest a change of men should endanger all the *valuable* institutions in the state; but all our institutions now depend on the mere will of a set of men, who for the perpetuation of their own power, have broken down one of our most valuable institutions, and have innovated on most of the steady habits of the state. We ask for a safer guaranty of these institutions.

As to the College, we have indeed been distressed by its uniform combination with our state directors against a republican administration, by its encouragement of *public* abuse on our cause, and by its preference, in appointments, to the sons of federalists: But as knowledge is the foundation of liberty, it will be our interest to yield as ample support to that and other institutions of learning, as is now given. We wish our sons to be worthy of our daughters, and this cannot be done, unless they are instructed in some arts and sciences, beside ploughing, hoeing and going to meeting.*

As to the system of taxation, it can be equitably improved to the immense relief of the laboring classes of our people. The old doctrine of TAXATION AND REPRESENTATION INSEPARABLE ought to be revived. Every man, who pays money or renders public services common or military, should have a voice in choosing the men, who are to guage his pocket or estimate his strength, and there is no danger in suffering the poor man's vote to weigh as much as the rich man's.

As to lotteries and 12 per cent bridge and turnpike companies, it is to be hoped that public patronage of gaming and usury will never be extended.

As to incorporations, it may be well to provide by a general law that all men may gain what they can honestly, that they may expend it prudently and charitably—and that all men may purchase

* This refers to Mr. Tracy's project to intruque the national debt and taxes, and thereby bring the backs of the people to a condition that they shall know only hoe to plough and hoe and go to meeting, which is the real ten ten, modern federalism.

valuable books and may read them carefully; but as to raising a corporation from every brook and bush in order to support the manufacturers of corporations, we consider it highly aristocratic.

As to the missionary society, we have lamented, that in a provision for an accumulating fund to be raised by contribution, a kingdom of this world had been allotted them, and that when the church was said to be so much in danger here, and when many flocks had no pastors, settled ministers and candidates should be sent to other states to preach the gospel: But as this and many other corporations have begun business with their privileges, they will doubtless retain them.

As to religion, we shall never be guilty of pressing it into public service, nor shall we refuse it the aids, which public sentiment may demand.—The common charge, that we are opposed to the support of religion is confuted by the fact, that in republican towns federal clergy have been supported without those hindrances, which have been experienced by a few republican clergymen in federal towns.

In that profession, hypocrisy is more easily practised, more profitable and impressive than in any other; hence among the higher orders of it have been generally found deceivers, making great professions of piety, while they were forming strong leagues with the powers of this world. We do not believe in the piety of those high priests in this state, who in the circulation of Robbison and Barruel, and in the preaching of political sermons, have endeavored to humble us.

Bound to mount Zion and the city of the living God, if such are your pilots, they will land you on a very different coast.

But in respect to the body of the clergy, if their sons or brothers are in the nominations, they will hereafter trust their elections to laymen. They will remember that they are not called on for taxes or public service and that it is *dishonest for them to vote away the money of the poor of their people who are deprived of voting.* They will reflect on their high calling, the demand for all their time and talents in the service of their master, and the certain loss of their influence, if they continue to be partizans.—Let them look to Paul and the holy apostles of their Lord, and see whether they were associated with infidel Jews to destroy the

power of Cæsar. *We have always distinguished between these clergy and their political brethren who have deceived them.* The leaders will doubtless stand firmly against us to the last, but the others will retire from elections.

Republicans, in the midst of national blessings it is natural for all of us to seek the security of some rights at our own firesides. If all the neighboring country is fruitful and yet our own fields are barren, we may suffer famine. If all the other states are republican, yet we are invested by aristocracies, we suffer. In a narrow room man may be confined from light, and in a small State man may be enslaved.

Our rejoicing, allayed by the consideration that our state has no weight in the general scale, should stimulate to exertion. In his confined sphere of action each may do much for himself and the general cause; and a single vote may decide the fate of a nation.

While we rejoice in the administration of President Jefferson, in the assurance of his re-election, and in the acquisition of Louisiana, let us look firmly at the obstacles which oppose us, and resolve that another year shall give us occasion of triumph in the restoration of this state to the constellation from which it is now a fallen star.

And let the great question be decided,

Whether Moses and Aaron shall, by clinging any longer together, continue to deprive thousands of their rights, to bid defiance to the general government, to sink religion below freezing point, to make professions instead of morals a tendry, and send the principles of civil and religious liberty abroad to seek some new revolution, of which they shall be the victims.























